

**Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study
High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group – Work Session**

Meeting #5 – May 5, 2011, 7 p.m.

STUDY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2008 Transportation Master Plan

In May 2004, the City established the Ad Hoc Transportation Task Force to develop/update the City's Transportation Master Plan. A central focus of this Task Force was to increase the prevalence and use of transit in the City. After many public meetings, hearings and work sessions, the Ad Hoc Transportation Task Force issued the City of Alexandria Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan in January 2008, which was subsequently adopted by City Council in April 2008. The first chapter in this Master Plan focuses on "Transit" and states that, "the City will expand local and regional transportation options to reduce traffic congestion and decrease public dependence on the automobile." The Master Plan continues by noting that the first step to making this happen is to "secure dedicated, congestion-free, transit rights-of-way for future transit services using advanced technologies." Three specific "corridors" in the City were identified in the Master Plan as being priority locations for "transit" – one of which is the Van Dorn/Beauregard Corridor, also known as Transit Corridor C.

As originally envisioned in the City's Transportation Master Plan, Transit Corridor C would "begin at the northern City limit with Arlington along Beauregard Street, coordinating and integrating service with Arlington County, to provide a connection to the Pentagon to the North. Traveling south, the corridor will provide access to the Mark Center, Landmark Mall area, and Eisenhower West area in the City. At its southern terminus the Van Dorn/Beauregard corridor will coordinate and integrate with service provided by Fairfax County to Kingstowne and points south. In addition, this corridor will provide for a direct connection to the Van Dorn Street Metrorail station via dedicated lanes." (City of Alexandria Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan, January 25, 2008, p. 1-9)

Alexandria City Council Strategic Plan (Revised 2010)

In September 2009, the Alexandria City Council convened to discuss development of a new strategic plan for the City. The mission was to assess the direction of the City and, where necessary, provide a strategic course of action for realizing the goals.

The strategic plan offers direction and focus on issues that are critically important to improving Alexandria. Similarly, the plan sets priorities and determines a course for progress. The plan includes seven strategic goals, each of which is defined by objectives and initiatives.

Strategic Goal #3 is stated as: "A multi-modal transportation network that supports sustainable land use and provides internal mobility and regional connectivity for Alexandrians".

Objective #4 of Goal 3 is stated as: “Increase transit options for locally oriented and through trips emphasizing interjurisdictional coordination”. It’s initiatives include:

- Finalize planning and begin construction on Corridor A (Potomac Yard Transitway).
- Begin formal planning and engineering on Corridor C (Beauregard/Van Dorn).
- Improve frequency (headways) on current transit routes to meet urban transit standards.
- Supplement or revise conventional vehicle “level of service” measures used by the City for traffic impact studies with “person throughput” or “person delay” measures that integrate auto, transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel into a single measure based on the person-capacity of streets.

Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study

The Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study builds on the 2008 City Council adopted Transportation Master Plan recommendation for providing enhanced transit service in the North-South, Duke Street, and Van Dorn/Beauregard corridors. The Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study (began in Summer 2010) involves the following for each corridor:

- Development of concepts to provide enhanced transit services
- Evaluation of different transit mode technologies (bus, enhanced bus, bus rapid transit, and streetcar);
- Evaluation of alternatives for transit operations considering median and side running configurations;
- Evaluation of the tradeoffs between mixed traffic and dedicated lane facilities;
- Identification of overall corridor implementation action plans to inform and guide future study and engineering efforts for each corridor;
- Coordination with environmental permitting agencies to discuss the likely scope of future environmental documentation to be required based on the type of funding to be sought;
- Coordination with adjacent localities and regional agencies

The goal of the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study is to identify and adopt a transit enhancement strategy (concept) for each study corridor and provide an action plan to guide future study. The project will involve planning, a conceptual level of engineering, concept-level environmental study, and public outreach and coordination.

Role of the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group

In September 2010, the City Manager established the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group (CWG), as part of the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study (*See memorandum to the City Manager, dated September 8, 2010*). The purpose of this group is to review technical and financial issues which are likely to arise as the consultants and staff assess the issues related to the implementation of high capacity transit in the corridors.

The mission of CWG is to provide input to staff on such issues as route alignments, cross-sections, land use considerations, ridership, and financing.

The CWG will receive staff and consultant briefings on various aspects of the exclusive Transit Corridor Feasibility Study, as the study progresses. The CWG will review options and priorities, and ensure that technical questions regarding ridership, alignment, method of operations, and finance are addressed. They will also advise on particular issues of alignment that are arising as a result of the Beauregard corridor study. The CWG meetings are open to the public and allow for public comment.